

Carlo Monaldi

(c.1683- c.1760)

Italian sculptor

He was probably born in Rome around 1683, as it originates from the inscription at the base of the statue of S. Gaetano Thiene, realized by Monaldi in 1730 in St. Peter in the Vatican, in which he declares Roman and 47 years.

There is no reliable news about the formation, but his or her alien was hypothesized in the orbit of Camillo Rusconi's Roman sculpture school. A little over twenty years he attended some sculpture competitions at the Accademia di S. Luca: in 1705 (Third Class, 3rd Prize), in 1707 (Second Class, 1st Prize), in 1709 (First Class, 3rd Prize) , in 1710 he participated without being rewarded and in 1711 obtained the 1st prize for the First Class. The themes assigned to the participants were drawn from famous historical episodes of ancient Rome or proposed to copy works preserved in the major buildings of the city (Academy Awards ...).

In 1698 he was paid for the statue of *Humility*, in the first niche left of the nave of St. Mary Magdalene in Rome in the cycle depicting the Virtues of Good Confession.

This is one of the first works of Monaldi; if his date of birth was confirmed in 1683, at the time of the statue he was only fifteen years old. Celebrated by Riccoboni for the mercy of the figure in which the eagles of Correggio and the pictorial finishes of the plastic of Camillo Mariani are recognized, is more appreciated by Baroque than the later works of Monaldi; it is to be noted that the impetus of strong contrasts of lights and shadows and the exasperated contrast of plastic masses, typically Bernini, attenuate, giving greater importance to linear and chromatic elements, more modulated on the surface.

An important meeting for Monaldi's career was that of the influential general minister of the Friars Minor Franciscan Giuseppe Maria Figueiredo Fonseca from Evora called Portughesino (1690-1752), ambassador to Rome of John V of Portugal, who cared for the He also co-ordinated cultural and artistic relations and coordinated, from Rome, the grandiose sculptural decoration of the palace-monastery (known as the Palacio Nacional), which the sovereign wanted at Mafra. On the commission of Father of Evora, Monaldi in 1720 made the statue of St. Francis of Assisi, placed in the lower order of the chair of the chair in St. Peter in the Vatican. In this prestigious artistic occasion, Monaldi made a sculpture where the effects of subtle pictorialism concentrate on the delicate expression of a commotion of religiousness in the face of the saint. The good artistic consideration gained during these years by Monaldi's works certainly contributed to him as a teacher of sculpture at the Portuguese Art Academy set up in Rome in 1720. From October 1720 he joined the Virtuous Congregation at the Pantheon; when the confreres decided in 1728 to restore at the expense of the chapel of S. Giuseppe di Terrasanta in the Pantheon, Monaldi was asked for a stucco relief with *Rest in Egypt* for the right wall of the chapel. The composition prevails in a decorative language with which Monaldi composes rhythmically the figures characterized by the essence of gestures and expressions.

On June 4, 1730, Monaldi was admitted as an Academician of Merit in the Academy of St. Luke, after accepting the request of the academics to renounce to belong to the Compagnia dei Falegnami and to exercise the office of "Bombardiere in Castel Sant Angelo". Between 1729 and 1730 Monaldi made the Venetian Ambassador in Rome, Barbon Morosini, the travertine fountain with the Venetian Venue with the sea in the great courtyard of the Venice Palace in Rome.

The stone sticks bearing the shields with the names of Venetian conquests (Cyprus, Dalmatia, Morea and Candia) were added in 1930 by G. Prini. The composition conceived by Monaldi is designed by Baroque circular spaces in an original vision of the enveloping rhythm of the elegant figures and solved with a modulated and linear chromatic typical of the Roman baroque.

Particularly significant is Monaldi's participation in the sculptural decoration of the Corsini chapel in S. Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, commissioned by Clement XII (dedicated to St. Andrea Corsini) to house his tomb and that of Cardinal Neri Corsini senior. The chapel's architecture was entrusted to A. Galilei and sculpture works took place between 1732 and 1735. In 1732 Clement XII decided to use some porphyry columns and an ancient porphyry thermal fountain in the chapel in the Pantheon; the marble statue that was supposed to serve for his predecessor Benedict XIII would be remodeled by "the famous chisel of C. Munaldi". During the work, the marble statue of *Clement XII* made by Monaldi was considered unsuccessful and in 1735 was replaced by one of G.B. Maini and transported to Palazzo Corsini in Florence. At the sides of the statue of the pontiff, Monaldi had, between 1733 and 1734, made the two statues of Abundance and Magnificence. The two elongated figures are constructed with an oblique setting where ample and rich clothes alternate with broad deep ripples that create an effect of great elegance and lightness. For the model of the façade of St. John in Lateran requested to Galilei, Monaldi carved statues and bas-reliefs (1732).

Between 1731 and 1733 Monaldi, like most of the sculptors active in the Corsini Chapel in St. John Lateran, contributed to the decoration of the cathedral of Mafra in Portugal by King Giovanni V.

A large correspondence, from 1730 onwards, between José Correa d'Abzen and Father d'Evora informs us about the events related to sculptural decoration. The works realized by Monaldi, performed in Rome between 1731 and 1733, are: the bas-relief for the portal of the basilica with the *Madonna and Child and S. Antonio* arrived in Lisbon in 1731 and "very praised until we saw the marble" The statues of *St. Dominic, St. Francis, St. Sebastian, St. Vincent, St. Teresa* and *St. Philip Neri* for the exterior facade and the statue of *St. Elia* for the 'internal. In the museum of Mafra is preserved the painted terracotta statue of *S. Teresa* and in the national palace of Mafra a sketch for *S. Chiara*. Monaldi's work, together with that of other artists such as Maini, G. Lironi, A. Corsini and many others, is a true anthology of Roman sculpture of the first half of the eighteenth century.

Between 1733 and 1738, as part of the expansion work of the port of Ancona, which was commissioned by Clement XII and entrusted to L. Vanvitelli, for the construction of the new arm of the lazaretto and of the chapel of S. Rocco, Monaldi executed for the temple a bas-relief in stucco with the *Blessed Virgin, the Child Jesus and s. Rocco*.

The figured oval, with a pair of columns, becomes almost an architectural insert and symbolically marks the direction of the sea. Although the work is very ruined, it still shows a remarkable artistic quality for late Baroque sensibility expressed in the faces of the Virgin and S. Rocco.

Around 1741, Monaldi performed the travertine statue of *St. Gregory the Great* (upper order, second figure from the right) for the loggia of S. Maria Maggiore, one of the most important works sites promoted in Rome by Benedict XIV. F. Fuga and the greatest sculptors of the time worked. Much more demanding was the participation of Monaldi, between 1741 and 1745, in the new decoration of the central nave of St. Mark in Rome, which Cardinal A.M. Querini.

Of the twelve stucco reliefs dedicated to the Apostles, drawn on designs by Clemente Orlandi, Monaldi made the stories of *St. James Major baptizing Ermogene*, *St. Philip baptizing the eunuch*, the *Vocation of Jesus. Matthew*, the *Unfaithfulness of St. Thomas*, *St. James the Lesser*, *St. Paul and the Magician* (right wall from the entrance). If Monaldi's compositions reflect a spatial organization typical of Baroque classicism, his greatest ability is to be able to connect the figures through an intense system of intimate and paused appearances. Coloristic effects are obtained through a clever and elegant game of chiaroscuro.

Prior to 1740, Monaldi had executed the marble bust of *Father José de Fonseca d'Evora*, placed with dedicatory inscription at the entrance to the Aracelitiana or Eborensis Library, wanted by d'Evora in the Arc de Triomphe (in 1883 was transferred to the palace of the Roman Collegium). José de Fonseca, who became bishop of Oporto in 1741, continued to use the work of artists active in Rome in those years, as some of the letters from Father Evora know that for a silver statue of the Immaculate, execution of the drawing in Maini or, in the absence of this, in Bracci to Lironi or Monaldi, and all had to be inspired by the paintings of Reni or Maratta; in 1754 a bas-relief with *Madonna and Child*, made by Monaldi, had broken in the journey between Rome and Lisbon and therefore another bronze was asked for in Maini or in Monaldi.

Among the last works of Monaldi remember the funeral monument of Cardinal Prospero Marefoschi and the funeral monument of Cardinal Raniero Simonetti realized between 1750 and 1751 with the architect G. Theodoli in S. Salvatore in Lauro.

In 1754 Monaldi was chosen by the Accademia di S. Luca, with Filippo Della Valle, Pietro Bracci and Francesco Vergara, as a teacher at the Academy of Nude in Campidoglio, that same year that Benedict XIV wanted.

We do not know the exact date of Monaldi's death, which was supposed to occur in 1760, as evidenced by the Book of the Virtuous Congregations at the Pantheon, where a solemn Mass for the late sculptor Monaldi is marked on 12 September. 1760.

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